General Audiences

Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings

Gen
M/M

Don't Hug Me I'm Scared (Webseries)

Duck/Red Guy (Don't Hug Me I'm Scared)
Duck & Red Guy & Yellow Guy (Don't Hug Me I'm Scared)

Red Guy (Don't Hug Me I'm Scared)
Yellow Guy (Don't Hug Me I'm Scared)
Duck (Don't Hug Me I'm Scared)

Movie Night
Couch Cuddles
Platonic Cuddling
Late Night Conversations
Past Abuse
Past Child Abuse
this sounds a lot more drastic than it is but I just want to warn you
Father Figures
Families of Choice
Unconventional Families
Time Shenanigans
curtesy of Lesley
Canon Typical Weirdness
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder - PTSD
TW: british food

English ← Previous Work Part 3 of home is where I want to be, but I guess I'm already there Next Work → IM DEALING WITH IT , moby's fav dhmis fics +_+

the big comfy couch

LittleMeowMeowEnjoyer

Summary:

"Have we always had a couch?"

"What?" Duck looks up, coffee sloshing over the lip of his cup. "A couch?"

"Yeah there's a red couch," Red squints his eyes, taking a long, languid sip of his own mug. "In the sitting room."

Notes:

I had like 4 other WIPs roughly planned before this random plot thread grabbed me by the throat and forced me to write it, honestly I had zero idea where this was going until it was halfway written so I was just kind of along for the ride! I really did intend for this to be shorter I swear, but exposition is my weakness.

So, I've finally started to wade a little into the more angsty conversations, I'd like to think they're starting to exit survival mode and it's left room for them to process some trauma. I'm currently writing this as if Lesley is content to just watch them do whatever because it's more interesting than torturing them with teachers (mainly because I need a reason for this AU to exist 🤡). This is definitely the most OOC/gooey part of this AU so far but I need them to be happy so bad you guys like I need this for me personally.

Follow me on my NEW TWITTER!! @myshredda sometimes I'll post snippets of fics before they're uploaded here 😈

(See the end of the work for more notes (#work_endnotes) .)

"Have we always had a couch?"

"What?" Duck looks up, coffee sloshing over the lip of his cup. "A couch?"

"Yeah there's a red couch," Red squints his eyes, taking a long, languid sip of his own mug. "In the sitting room."

"Well, what about our chairs?" The duck is stirring a spoonful of honey into his coffee, gaze bleary, still half-asleep.

Red leans back, craning his neck to see into the other room. Yellow does as well, though his view is blocked by the taller one.

"Looks like my chair is still there, and your rocker is on the other side."

"What about my chair?" Yellow says, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed despite the early hour. His cheery tone made Duck groan and chug down half his mug, annoyed at the chipper attitude of the youngest one.

"I thiiiink," Red cranes harder, back popping at the motion. "It's pushed up against the other wall."

"Can we go look at the new c-couch?" Yellow kicks his foot once or twice, expression hopeful.

"Might be a trick," Duck breaks in, propping his head in his palm, elbow bent to rest on the table.

"We could go together." Yellow shoots back, clearly trusting in the older two's abilities to keep him safe. Red's heart swells a little, though it could just be from the caffeine.

"Oh, *fine.*" Duck sighs, glancing up at Red for input. Red just shrugs, sipping his drink again. "We'll go look *after* I've finished my coffee."

"Okay!" Yellow smiles, eyes glinting in excitement. Swaying side to side in the way he does, hands patting rhythmically on the table, as if dancing to a song only he could hear. He waits impatiently as Red and Duck sip at their coffee, fingers tapping faster as their cups grow empty. "Done yet?"

"No."

"Nope."

"Awwwwwwwww," Yellow moans, flopping his body down onto the table, quite dramatically if you ask Red. "Come *onnnnnnnnn*."

"The couch will still be there in five minutes, don't be so tetchy." Duck is grinning into his mug, taking painstakingly slow sips. Quirking his brows at Yellow as the younger one glares at him, clearly unamused.

"Why are you both so *slow?* " He whines, thumping his head on the table. "Bet it's 'cause you're *old*." He adds, barely audible.

"Watch the cheek," Duck sniffs. "Or I shall throw the couch out into the bins, and there'll be no sitting down for anyone."

"Can't lift the couch, s'too heavy" Yellow mumbles, successfully chastised. "An' it can't fit in the bins. Too big."

"Well," Red sighs, swirling the last dregs around in his cup. "If you two are quite finished, I'd like to take a look at our new couch."

He smiles as the yellow one cheers, successfully circumnavigating a bickering match between the other two that could have potentially lasted hours. Neither knew when to back down, and they shared the same stubborn bluntness that could easily result in unintentionally (or intentionally) hurt feelings when left to their own devices. Duck sniffs again, placing his empty mug on the table, but Red knows him well enough now to know he's not really upset.

"Shall we?" Red stands, gathering his and Duck's empty mugs with one mitt. After receiving nods from housemates, excited and exasperated in turn, he deposits the mugs in the sink. He ambles forward, the other two following close behind, using his elevated stature as some sort of shield as they enter the sitting room.

The couch sits innocently, nearly an identical hue to the tallest member of their house. Yellow reaches up to hold the fuzzy expanse of Red's hip, steadying himself. He's quiet now, nervous of the unknown despite his earlier excitement. Red pays him no mind, used to his gripping hold by now. Duck prods at it with one foot, also reaching up to hold onto Red for stability. The taller one ignores the way his palms grow sweaty at the contact this time, nothing to read into there.

"We-well?" He says, clearing his throat as his voice breaks. God he's so embarrassing all the time, he feels like locking himself in the loo and screaming into the bathmat.

"It seems normal," Duck reports back, still kicking at it. "No needles or razor blades."

“Was…Was that a potential danger?” Red stares down at him, unnerved by the statement.

“It’s always a possibility with these sorts of things,” his voice is grim, but there’s a teasing gleam in his eyes.

“What sorts of things? Spontaneous couch acquisition?”

“Something like that…” With one final kick Duck releases Red’s side, and the taller one mourns the loss of it a little too deeply. Best not to think about that. He covertly wipes his palms against the front of his legs, accidentally jostling Yellow’s grasp. The smaller one just looks up at him, a wobbly smile beginning to form.

“So is it- is it safe?” Yellow’s bouncing now, pure excitement rendering him unable to stand still. “Can I have a touch on- of it?”

“I don’t see why not,” Red sighs, wishing he had another coffee. It’s still early, and he desperately needs more energy to deal with the infectious enthusiasm of the youngest one.

“Yay!” Yellow crows, running eagerly to the couch. He attempts to climb onto it, but bounces off the side before he could get a leg on it, landing face up on the floor. He rests there a moment before trying again, ignoring Duck’s open laughter, and successfully makes his way up to the cushions, flopping unceremoniously onto his belly. “It’s soft!”

“Soft like your head,” Duck snickers, squawking as Red reaches to flick the feathers near his auricular. “Ouch! What was that for?”

“Both your heads are soft,” Red mumbles, but brushes his hand gently against the shorter one’s shoulder in apology. Lingering for as long as he dared to, which wasn’t very long truthfully.

“You baby him too much,” Duck twitters, annoyed, seemingly unbothered by the warm weight of Red’s mitt as it rests on his shoulder. “He doesn’t even care that I think his head is soft.”

“He might.”

“He absolutely does not. Hey, you there, little…thing.” He’s waving at Yellow now, as if they’re 30 meters apart rather than one-half. “Do you care if I think your head is soft?”

“Huh?” Yellow looks up, the skin of his cheek indented with the texture of the couch from how hard he had been pressing his face into it. “Is that- is it bad? Like how I’m stupid in the head?”

“No,” Duck says quickly, haughty attitude dropping in an instant. “And that’s not your fault anyhow.”

“Oh, well, I guess not.” He itches at his chin, gazing at Duck with large, dark eyes. “Is soft good?”

“Soft is nice.” Duck prattles on, rapidly, as if the speed of his words will make up for the previously snarky tone he’d put on. “Soft is very nice. Like that one’s middle.” He motions at Red vaguely, then gasps in shock, processing what he’s just said aloud.

“You think my soft middle is nice?”

“Yeah, it is nice!” Yellow breaks in, as Duck buries his head in his hands. “It’s fun to hug.”

“Wow.” Red intones, as if his face isn’t alight in flames. Sweat beading up and dripping down his back, his forehead, probably soaking into his yarn. “Noted.”

“Well, you’ve lounged on the couch,” Duck mumbles, changing the subject without removing his fingers from where they cover his eyes. “Have you had your fun yet?”

Yellow wiggles around on the cushion for a moment, as if testing the comfort and fun-ness of his current position. Still sprawled out on his belly, kicking one foot then the other, before flipping over onto his back.

“I like it! S’comfy.” He sits up then, cross-legged, nibbling at the knuckles of his left hand. “Can we- can we watch a movie?”

“On the couch?” Red chances a look at Duck, cheeks still a bit hot. The other one just shrugs, taking an impartial stance in the current discussion. Well, it’s not like they had any other plans today. “I guess so.”

“I’ll get the blankets!” Duck exclaims, receiving twin expressions of shock. “What? You two are the only ones allowed to be excited about things? I can be excited too!”

“Nobody said you couldn’t,” Red raises his hands placatingly.

“Well…Good!” He’s already rummaging through the hall closet, shoving a few dusty boxes together to stand on. The boxes release a soft, whinging moan as he clambers on them, but they stop as he thumps them with his foot, once or twice. A tacky, brown liquid seemed to have stained them at some point, bottoms all crusted over with muck, but the blankets Duck tugs down are untouched by the mystery substance. He tosses one to Red, all blue plaid fleece with white accents, and the pink one with red polka dots is chucked at Yellow who has to scamper down off the couch to pick it up from the floor. Duck chooses a solid dark purply-blue for his own, hopping down off the whimpering boxes and kicking them back into the dark recesses of the closet, their wails silenced with the slam of the door.

“Has anybody got the clicker?”

“No,” Yellow giggles, already cocooning himself in his blanket, his face barely visible aside from his nose.

“I’ve got it,” Red sighs, gently nudging the youngest over to the left. Easing himself down slowly, blanket draped against his shoulders, cushions giving a little under his weight.

It seems as though some of his office weight-gain had made a reappearance, perhaps due to the meals Duck and Yellow had been cooking as of late. The duo had a knack for making fatty comfort foods, but had far less success in the vegetable department. Yellow had once gotten an aubergine so encrusted with breadcrumbs it baked black, burning down as hard as a rock. Red had to toss it out the window so it didn't stink up the kitchen bin, gently assuring a tearful Yellow he didn't mind eating the emergency stash of oven chips and beanie weenies for dinner that night. Perhaps the emergency stash had become more of a staple than a once-in-a-while food, thus, resulting in his *sturdier* frame as of late.

Yellow wriggles back over to Red, tucking himself neatly against the tallest one's side, nudging Red to drape his arm down over his small frame. He sighs, contentedly, body still encased in his blanket.

"Well," Red huffs a laugh, "You certainly look comfortable."

"I am, thank- *you*." Yellow grins, his sing-song tone muffled. Red just huffs again, affectionately.

He peers up to watch Duck as he fiddles with the TV, adjusting the antennas and warbling some colorful language until the picture gets clear. He'd suggest for the avian to close the blinds, but the sun appeared to be completely covered in cloud, rendering the house in semi-darkness. Hadn't it been a sunny morning? Maybe it had just been Yellow's sunny disposition that filled the kitchen with light and warmth earlier, one can never be too sure of what they experience before the caffeine fully takes effect after all.

Duck starts to notice this as well, squinting around the room suspiciously before zeroing in on Red. As if it's his fault the sun apparently decided to vanish back down below the horizon in the matter of minutes rather than hours.

Honestly, he had no idea why his housemates seemed to think he had any control over these situations. He puts on a front of feigned disinterest, but truly he was as lost in the interdimensional sauce as the rest of them. The thought of how helpless he was to protect his housemates made his pulse quicken, as did his breathing, the nerves making an anxious dampness prickle at his forehead. To calm himself he tugged Yellow even closer to his side, drawing a squeak out of the younger one much like a dog toy.

"Y'r squishing me!" he squeals, finally poking his head out of the blanket.

"Sorry," Red apologizes, but doesn't lessen his hold. Instead opting to rest the side of his head on the top of Yellow's, his elevated breaths rustling the fuzzy tufts of blue hair.

"S'okay, I like it."

"Well *I* would like to watch TV now," Duck plops down on the other side of Red, body pressed close due to the small-ish nature of the couch. Red supposes he may as well reserve himself to a lifetime of sweaty embarrassment at this rate. "Shall we?"

The room had grown even darker as Red swipes through channels with the remote, shadows of the fast-changing scenes flickering across the walls. The furniture and knick-knacks almost appeared to be moving in the stuttering light, almost as though the house was breathing around them. Alive with that statically charged energy that seemed to gather when they were together, as if the lack of teachers had to be made up for with an expectant atmosphere.

"Stop!" Yellow cries, startling Red out of his thoughts. "Go back!"

Red hits the back button, landing on a documentary about meat-processing. Mangled pink flesh was being stuffed into filmy intestinal tubes by a pair of yellow hands, aggressively maneuvering the sausages to a table flecked with gelatinous fat and viscera. The fists twisted the loops of meat into rough links, and a constant, angry noise could be heard, almost as if the man making the sausage were growling.

"You want to watch this?" Duck shudders, looking sick. He's got one palm pressed to his stomach, as if it's started to ache.

"No, no, no! Go back more."

Red complies, mumbling a quiet *'thank god'*, this time landing on the opening credits of a movie on Channel 3. Whimsical music tinkled softly as the image on the TV showed a wall covered in pictures of pigs, and a curly script that proudly spelled out *Babe.*

"Is this it?"

"Yeh." Yellow grins, snuggling back into Red's side. "Babe."

"*Babe*," Duck says slowly, as if trying to suss out the meaning of the word. He's leaning on Red now as well, their shoulders brushing, sending a lightning-hot flash of nerves through his gut. "What's it about?"

"Dunno," Red whispers, fighting to keep his voice even. "Just watch it."

Duck harrumphs, but quiets soon after, settling in closer to watch the film.

It's a strange movie about talking animals, and the farm they all live on. It's very brutal, the hierarchy of this farm, with animals for eating and animals for loving. It feels almost too close to their situation for comfort to Red, but Yellow is enthralled, his eyes glued to the screen, mouth agape. He was taking in every color, every texture, dark pupils blown in wonder as his digits gently twist the fabric of his blanket round-and-round.

Some scenes are shocking to Red, not that he'd admit to being taken aback by a children's film, and the way some of the other animals speak so crassly to the little pig, Babe, makes a tendril of guilt twist in his chest. Perhaps he and Duck should watch their words a bit more, though truthfully they hadn't been half-as bad in their behavior as of late. It was like the fog of anger and cruelty had lifted from the house, taking their sharp words and short fuses with it.

Yellow finally speaks again during the first break, talking loud enough to be heard over the shrill voice of some washed-up celebrity auctioning off portions of his body in exchange for quick cash. The going rate for a finger seemed to be twenty quid apiece or eighty for all five, not too bad actually.

"D'you guys like this?" He asks, pulling his blanket to drape more on his lap than the rest of his body.

"I guess so," Red replies, though truthfully he thinks it's a touch too juvenile for his tastes. "What about you?" He nudged Duck then, glancing over to his other side.

"It's fine." He yawns, leaning more of his weight onto Red. "I think I prefer Grolton and Hovris."

"Course you do," Red laughs, the noise vibrating deep in the hollow of his chest and rising up like the bubbles in a fizzy drink. "You're a regular creature of habit you are."

"I was just…" Yellow says, suddenly speaking up again. "Just thinking 'bout the doggies."

"Yeah? What about them?"

"Was thinking 'bout how they were- how they, uh, and the pig one. They were a family."

Red hums thoughtfully, exchanging a meaningful look with Duck. Family talk had fallen to the wayside after their experiences in that atrocity of a house, with the weird kids and the sprawling tree that had done something to Red he could never fully remember. A phantom twinge prickles in his arm when he tries hard to pull any images forward in his brain, and sometimes he thinks it would be worse if he knew what had caused it. He does, however, remember what came after.

The yellow one ignores their silence, just natters on beside him, squirming free from Red's arm so he's able to gesticulate with his hands.

"And I was just thinking that they- they all looked alike. The doggies. But the pig didn't." He pauses a moment, scowling to himself, as if focusing as hard as possible on his next words coming out right. "I just wonder about what you said. About guys like you. Cause they're- 'cause you're *red*."

Duck makes a muted sound of surprise next to him, sitting up taller to be able to see Yellow clearly. Bringing up something like that was very unlike him, even as jumbled as it was, clearly the thought had been ruminating the entirety of the time they'd been watching the film.

"Are you…are you asking about my, uh, my family?"

"Yeh," Yellow's fiddling with the fabric of his overalls, face downcast into his lap. Blanket pooling loosely around his body, the cheerful fabric succeeding in making him look even more vulnerable than he usually did. "Those guys. How come you didn't stay w'th 'em?"

Red felt as though he would have been less surprised if the youngest one had taken a bottle and smashed it into his head, like he'd done to Duck on computer day. He hadn't planned on ever discussing the intricacies of his family life with the other two, especially not wanting to bring up the fact that most of his kind had an ingrained distaste for him. It was a sort of scoff-on-sight situation, very pathetic to think about, much less speak about.

"I didn't really…fit in. With them." He answers carefully, ignoring the way Duck's stare bore into the side of his face. "They didn't like me that much, I don't think."

"That's sad." Yellow hums to himself, twisting his body to stare up at Red, expression sympathetic. Great, now the little guy felt sorry for him, could he get any more pitiful? "I'm- my d-dad isn't, uh, isn't very... Sometimes he doesn't… like me. Either. Or the way I act, or, uh, look at th-things."

Duck and Red sat very still for a moment, as they always did when Yellow brought up his estranged father. They both had their own personal reasons for despising the man that had some influence in the misery they lived in, but as they grew closer to their youngest housemate it had become more personal. They hated him for how he treated Yellow. The tormenting abuse and continuous meddling in his life was inexcusable, especially from the person that was supposed to protect him. Red knew his family dynamic wasn't exactly healthy, but they were leaps and bounds ahead of whatever twisted vision of fatherhood Roy upheld.

"Well," Red answers, words deliberately slow. "Maybe it doesn't matter what either of our families think about us. Does it?"

Yellow seems to ponder that during the rest of the commercial break, zoned out through the adverts for suicide prevention hotlines, suicide assistance hotlines, the new mystery bucket at Grolton's, some quiz show jingles, and the unblinking leer of the long-dead prime minister telepathically reminding them to brush their teeth after every meal or else risk being put on *the list.* Red hates the quiz show adverts, too loud and too many vibrant colors, but Yellow usually sings along with the theme tunes. His silence during the three that played just proved how deeply engrossed he was in his thoughts, a rarity for the most sensitive of the three.

Perhaps it was selfish of Red to bring up his family, with how different his circumstances were to Yellow. After all, it wasn't as bad. They'd never come to blows, they just sort of…avoided him, for his whole life. Or told him off for how improper he acted, when they finally remembered he existed. Emotional neglect isn't exactly the same as whatever the hell Roy had going on, he should probably just suck it up. Just as he'd opened his mouth to apologize for bringing it up, the yellow one finally spoke again.

"So your family is- is like. Kind of like my d- my… Like him?" He asks, picking at one of Red's yarn strings. The words make his heart flip, tumbling down into his gut and sloshing around the acid there.

"Kind of," Red says tentatively, glancing at Duck. The avian's expression is neutral, but there's a hint of sadness in his eyes. Red looks away, absently lowering the volume of the TV with the clicker. "They didn't- they didn't ever *do* anything. They just, I don't know, ignore me. I guess. Sometimes it's like I don't exactly…exist the right way. To them."

"Yeah," Yellow sighs quietly, peering up into the tallest one's face, expression almost sorrowful. "I know 'bout that. Sometimes it's like, maybe… Maybe he wishes that I weren't here. Maybe I shouldn't have ever been here at all."

Red sucks in a breath, almost dizzy, digesting what the smaller one had said. He never spoke of his d- of *Roy* in a way that even bordered on negative, always crowing about being his best friend, or him knowing how to do a handstand, or use a computer all by himself. How he discovered the concept of blinking and was there when the peanut M&M was invented. This was the first time he'd ever admitted their relationship wasn't exactly healthy, or that it was like the man's dislike of him was inherent. A hatred fostered for miniscule things, completely out of the realm of normality or lucidity. God, he despised that man, sometimes he feels as though he could just reach out a wrap his fist around his disgusting waste of a neck and *just*-

"Well, I say your families are tossers. I think it's better that you both exist." Duck cuts in, voice quiet. "I've never even had anyone. And if you both didn't exist, well I…I wouldn't have ever had a family at all, would I?"

The TV is reflecting light back onto Duck's face, shadows flickering, making his expression almost unreadable. Hadn't it been morning? It was so dark now, it was almost as if they'd stayed up all night watching television. Maybe they had. After all, the energy in the room felt like those oddly manic hours between midnight and sunrise, when time was simply a suggestion rather than a fact of life. Red remembers another night, time and space shifting, pressed up against the fridge, surrounded by dead teachers. Remembers how much more open Duck seemed to get when the darkness pressed in around them, words unfiltered, unlike the way they were when illuminated by daylight.

Wordlessly, Red caught Duck's hand in his own, squeezing gently in what he hoped would come across as supportive and caring. He didn't have a lot of experience with this sort of touch, the kind that went a bit deeper than friendly, but he wanted so badly to grow used to it. Duck just squeezed back, fingers damp, a steady pressure that made Red feel grounded in the dream-like darkness of the sitting room. A tether that reminded them both that they were real. Solid. They were living things that existed, despite the otherworldly meddling that had worked so tirelessly to snuff them out.

Red hooked his arm around Yellow, drawing him closer still, almost up into his lap. Pressing him desperately to his side, as if he'd slip away into the inky blackness and be lost to them if he were not held close. He clamped his eyes shut, and for one claustrophobic moment it felt as though an unbearable pressure was constricting around him, like some great fist was closing up his body. And then, as soon as it had come on, the moment dissolved, his lungs going back to their regularly scheduled intaking of air. Body sagging from the aftermath of his brush with fight-or-flight, endorphins leaking into his brain like a silted drip of rain through a hole in the roof.

He can hear Yellow talking to Duck now, with the ringing in his ears lessened.

"We're your- are we a family?" Yellow is saying, almost hopefully. "I thought we were a lawyer-having clump?"

"Families can be clumps," Duck answers sagely. They're both leaning over one of Red's legs, conversing across his lap as if it were the kitchen table. Duck still has Red's hand held firmly in his grasp, absentmindedly squeezing it from time to time. "And families can share lawyers. We can do all those things and be a family as well. Who cares what anybody else thinks?"

Yellow reflects over that, fingers gently playing with the soft fuzz of Red's knee. Then suddenly, he pauses, gazing up hopefully at the tallest one, his soft cheeks flushed a rosy pink.

"Do you think that we're a family?"

Red reaches his free hand to cradle the smaller one's face, thumb tenderly trailing the chubby curve of his cheek. He leans forward, gently resting his own forehead against Yellow's, lingering there a moment with closed eyes before sitting up and pulling the youngest one into a one-armed embrace.

"I do." He states simply, though there's so much more he'd like to say. It's almost as if the words are too big, too important to slip through the dark folds of his vocal chords. They're getting caught up into the fat lump that's growing in his throat, dying there as he flounders about what to say. The moment feels almost beyond words, like they'd just muss up the air and pollute it with distractions. "I really do."

Duck is squeezing him so hard it hurts, but it's a good hurt. The kind that reminds you you're alive, that you're vulnerable. He's leaning heavily against Red's side again as if the conversation had exhausted him physically, body resting bonelessly against his tallest housemate. It's calm for a moment, with them curled together on their newly-obtained couch, pressed together like kits in a nest. Simply basking in the feeling of safety that came now with their togetherness, an emotion akin to love blooms in Red's chest, normal to him now when it comes to his housemates.

The quiet is broken by Duck, giving a start against Red's shoulder, a strangled gasp escaping his beak. He's staring at the screen of the TV, horrified, the whites of his eyes widening to flash wildly in the low-light.

"What on *earth*…" he breaths, and Red's stomach drops down low with a sickening jerk of panic.

"*What are you* - Wh- Oh. Oh, *God*."

The scene playing near-silently on the TV showed some horrific animal attack, with one of those big cotton looking things being eaten by several dogs. Yellow, thankfully, couldn't see it, head still buried in the safety of Red's solid chest.

Duck fumbles for the remote, successfully tugging it up out of the mass of blankets, and starts flicking through the channels again. He settles on Rainbowfish, despite his earlier grousing about wanting to watch Grolton and Hovris, the old softie.

"Hush," Duck grumbles, clearly able to catch the amusement in Red's face despite the darkness of the room.

"I didn't say anything," He runs his thumb in teasing circles against Duck's knuckles, not at all panicking over the realization that they'd been holding hands for the last ten minutes.

"You were going to, you wretched git."

"Was not."

"You were so!"

"*Guysssssss,"* Yellow whines, twisting around in Red's arm to be able to see the TV while still tucked in his embrace. "Quiet. I'm *trying* to watch."

"Well now, is that any way to speak to your *family?* No cheek, or I shall put on a documentary about river sediment and cigarette ash."

"Those things wouldn't even be in the same *show."* Yellow huffs, but his left foot is jiggling rhythmically to an unheard tempo, clearly ecstatic over the avian's usage of the word family.

"Yes they would. It's a tale about what happens to rude little boys that shush people."

"What does that even mean?" Red laughs, relief flowing like water. "They turn into wet ash that smells like a river?"

"I don't *know*, you're supposed to back me up here." Red can feel the silent vibrations of Duck's own laughter through his side, kinetic energy thrumming from the press of skin where their bodies are flush.

"You're on your own with this one, Mate. I've got no idea what you're trying to say."

"Oh, shut up both of you. Watch the stupid Rainbowfish. Honestly, I don't know why everything has to be an ordeal with you two."

"You said to shut up but you're still *talkingggggggggg."* Yellow is moaning now, as if this conversation was the toughest thing he's had to endure thus far in his life. His head is flopping weakly against Red's shoulder, eyes screwed shut. Duck simply huffs and puffs to himself on Red's other side, muttering under his breath about tiny, cheeky yellow things and big, stupid red ones, still holding onto Red's mitt like it's something precious. Firmly, with a tender undertone that makes Red's brain fizzle out when he thinks too long about it.

He tunes out their squabbling, choosing to focus on the way their combined weights press heavily against both his sides. He finds comfort in the pressure there, the steady reminder that they're alive here, in this strange pink house. They're a family, no matter what those twin freaks said, or what his maroon brethren thinks, or whatever protests that yellow failure of a father might have. They're not here, now, in this sitting room, on this couch that blends in so well with his skin. Arguing over the merits of turning rude yellow boys into cigarette ash, and how rivers don't flow backwards, and how Duck absolutely will *not* let Yellow tape his mouth shut with sellotape so he can focus on the show *what would even possess you to say such a thing you rude little-*

Red just closes his eyes. He's part of a family, a real one this time.

One could grow used to this.

Notes:

For the sake of my brain I'm just going to assume they're watching an in-universe version of Babe (1995) where the humans are puppets or it's animated or something. I couldn't come up with an original movie concept that would fit into the story as well without everything getting confusing AND I feel like Babe was a dark and surprisingly violent children's

movie. I think the themes fit in super well with the DHMIS universe (families of choice, unfair social hierarchies, etc.) so….Babe.

Title is from The Big Comfy Couch! Another staple puppet show from my childhood that scared the absolute living shit out of me for existential reasons! That clock song went the fuck off though.

Red was having a tiny panic attack at the end btw, no meddling from Lesley involved. Dude has PTSD out the ass I'm sure of it.

Alternative title: *Red Guy voice* A man walks down the street. He says, "Why am I soft in the middle, now? Why am I soft in the middle? The rest of my life is so hard."

Series this work belongs to:

- ← Previous Work (http://archiveofourown.org/works/42528906) Part 3 of home is where I want to be, but I guess I'm already there (http://archiveofourown.org/series/3179772) Next Work → (http://archiveofourown.org/works/42872529)

Close (#)